

GENERAL MACARTHUR'S STRATEGIC SUCCESS DURING THE EARLY MONTHS OF THE KOREAN WAR

**A Monograph
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Abstract

GENERAL MACARTHUR'S STRATEGIC SUCCESS DURING THE EARLY MONTHS OF THE KOREAN WAR by LTC James D. Clay, U.S. Army, 51 pages.

From 1945-1950, the United States Army transitioned from a conventional force designed for maneuver warfare in Europe to a role, which supported the Air Force in their delivery of nuclear weapons. This secondary role emerged from strategic studies conducted by the National Security Council in response to President Truman's desire to focus military efforts against the communist East without bankrupting the nation. From this study, the National Security Council determined Communism as a threat to the free world, which triggered the start of a nuclear arms race. Determined that the Air Force would win future wars by delivering nuclear weapons on targets, the Army became the bill payer at the expense of its modernization efforts. This reduction in funding limited the Army's ability to train at a collective level and forced the Army to use dated equipment from World War II. Consequently, Senior Army leaders put their faith in the advent of nuclear weapons and did not train their forces for other contingencies such as a limited war.

Because of this inability to foresee other contingencies by Senior Army leaders, no policy addressed the reality of a limited war. This shortsightedness at the national level manifested itself in the Army as leaders failed to train and equip their Soldiers for war. Additionally, false reporting by military leaders led to inflated assessments of the capabilities of the Republic of Korea's Army. With the invasion of South Korea, North Korea revealed the true nature of its war machine and the United States entered a war it was not prepared to fight. From this failure to prepare for war, the United States suffered strategic defeat during the early months exemplified by the employment of Task Force Smith.

During the early months, the United States suffered death and destruction while fighting against a powerful Communist alliance with a clear purpose and direction. However, against the odds, General MacArthur's forces reversed this destruction and seized the initiative through maneuver warfare to capture the Port at Pusan. While at Pusan, General MacArthur used time wisely to make sense of a complex environment and develop a strategy to defeat the North Koreans. From this understanding, General MacArthur provided purpose and direction, which enabled his forces to control the tempo on the battlefield and hold the line at Pusan.

This paper will explore the failures before and during the early months of the Korean War to discover how General MacArthur overcame these challenges to secure a monumental victory that reversed the destructive tide of the Korean War.

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Introduction

Many military professionals regard General of the Army Douglas MacArthur as a very polarizing figure in military history, from his strategic use of maneuver to defeat the Japanese at Leyte to his public defiance of the Commander in Chief, President Truman on his policy towards the Korean War.¹ Seen by many as a tactical genius, while others viewed him as an egomaniac, General MacArthur exhibited both sides of this complex character, but the evidence shows that MacArthur possessed a level of military competence that set him apart from his contemporaries.² In 1950, MacArthur demonstrated one of his most embarrassing defeats as well as one of his most brilliant successes within the course of ten weeks. MacArthur exemplifies a level of confidence that earned him the modern reputation as an operational artist from his ability to turn the tide of war and restore South Korea's sovereignty.

Although the term operational art did not exist in the doctrine of 1949-50, MacArthur developed his operational intuition through reflection on maneuver warfare throughout his career and implemented this wisdom during the first ten weeks of the Korean War.³ Coming into vogue in the 1990s, the Army now defines operational art as “the pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose.”⁴ An examination of the first ten weeks of the Korean War demonstrates that MacArthur created a campaign plan that provided his forces the purpose, direction, and motivation to adapt and to

¹ William Manchester, *American Caesar: Douglas Macarthur, 1880-1964* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978), 429, 634.

² Ibid., 429.

³ Donald A. Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990), 67.

⁴ U.S. Army, "ADP 3-0 *Unified Land Operations*," (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, October 2011), 9.

make sense of a complex and uncertain environment.⁵ Further, under his leadership, the United States Far East Command (FECOM) and the United Nations (UN) dictated the operational tempo, generated forces to extend the operational reach, created simultaneity and depth to disperse the enemy, and ultimately cause the enemy to culminate.

MacArthur's practice as operational artist was not without its shortcomings. Through his personal bias, he attempted to impose control over an unknown enemy without understanding the actual conditions of the operating environment. MacArthur believed, based on cultural arrogance, that American presence on Korean soil would deter the North Korean advance towards Pusan. MacArthur developed this theory without analysis of indicators or signposts that would validate his assumptions.⁶ The same brilliant mind that produced OPERATION CHROMITE to restore the international boundary also misconstrued the North Koreans as a force who would cower at American presence. The tactical defeat of Task Force Smith provided the North Koreans the unintended consequence of a strategic victory and proved that a western force could be defeated on the battlefield.⁷ Then again, following defeat, MacArthur's ability to design a campaign plan and reverse the destructive tempo set by the North Koreans demonstrated a kind of thinking that current military thinkers would describe as operational art, four decades later before the concept became doctrine. This study examines MacArthur's successes and failures in the practice of operational art to organize and employ military forces during the first ten weeks of the Korean War.

⁵ U.S. Army, "Field Manual 6-22 *Army Leadership*," (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2006), 7-6.

⁶ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 336. Carl von Clausewitz, Michael Eliot Howard, and Peter Paret, *On War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 154.

⁷ Dietrich Dörner, *The Logic of Failure: Recognizing and Avoiding Error in Complex Situations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus Books, 1996), 172.

Method

This paper tells the story of MacArthur, the good, the bad, and the ugly through the lens of operational art during the first ten weeks of the Korean War. First, an examination of the strategic context will attempt to explain the most important historical antecedents relative to the onset of the Korean War.⁸ The strategic context exposes the background for decisions made by national leaders that ultimately placed MacArthur's FECOM in a disadvantageous position against the North Koreans. It also reveals MacArthur's own operational failures to train and prepare his forces for combat making. Next, a comparison of current doctrine and the 1949 doctrine under which MacArthur's forces prepared and executed operations reveals the existence of parallels in terminology related to operational art. A comparison between the contemporary and modern doctrine highlights connections and differences translated to the modern usage of operational art. An examination of the depth of planning by North Korea to invade South Korea provides an understanding of the joint military effort required to seize the initiative from the enemy. Finally, an analysis of MacArthur's guidance, using the elements of operational art from Field Manual 3-0, Change 1, *Operations*, reveals evidence of the use of operational thought by MacArthur.⁹

Strategic Context

1945-1950

Following the Potsdam Conference of August 1945, an arbitrary line drawn in Korea demarcated where the United States and the Soviet Union would receive the surrender of Japanese Forces. The United States would receive the surrender south of the thirty-eighth parallel

⁸ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 65.

⁹ U.S. Army, "Field Manual 3-0 *Operations* Change 1," (Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2011), 7-5.

and the Soviet Union received the surrender of Japanese Forces north of the thirty-eighth parallel. Unintended to be a physical line to divide North and South Korea, the thirty-eighth parallel served as an administrative line created to receive the surrender of Japanese forces. However, the Soviet Union did not share the same vision for a unified Korea that the United States held and disrupted attempts to unify Korea.¹⁰ From this division, the United States did not envision a lasting peace in Korea and chose an arbitrary boundary based on military convenience.¹¹ This division separated the industrially rich north from the agriculturally rich south and did not include an appreciation for the terrain, commerce, towns close to the border, or future implications for the Korean people. This separation provided an opportunity for the Communist North Koreans to exploit this divide by inciting an insurgency in the south in hopes of unifying the country under Communist rule.¹² This military decision to partition the acceptance of the Japanese surrender resulted from a late night's discussion on August 14, 1945, between two tired Army officers, Colonels Dean Rusk and Charles Bonesteel, without a provincial map on hand and had the unintended consequence to create political, economic, and military tensions between North and South Korea for the next sixty years.¹³

Some scholars view the Korean War as a traditional Maoist people's war. Mao Zedong's three phases of insurgency include phase one - organization, consolidation, and preservation; phase two - the continued expansion of the insurgency; and phase three – a traditional war to

¹⁰ United States Congress House Committee on Foreign Affairs, "H.R. 5330," (Washington D.C.: U.S. GPO, 1949), 4.

¹¹ U.S. Department of State Office of Public Affairs, "United States Policy in the Korean Crisis," (Washington D.C.: U.S. GPO, 1950), IX.

¹² Roy Edgar Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu : (June-November 1950)* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1961), 3.

¹³ James F. Scnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GPO, 1992), 5; United States Congress House Committee on Foreign Affairs, "H.R. 5330," 4.

destroy the enemy.¹⁴ Under this interpretation, phase one of the insurgency started in September 1945, when the United States proposed that the Soviets accept the surrender of Japanese forces north of the thirty-eighth parallel. The poor geographic selection of the zone of government added to the people's frustration with the selection of the international boundary. From this frustration, the Communist supported South Korean Labor Party (SKLP) developed as a communist political front in the south. Phase two of the insurgency began with the rebellion of insurgents in the pro-communist territory of Cheju-do and spread into other South Korean provinces. However, these North Korean constabularies could not stop the free elections during these two phases and South Korean security forces captured or executed most Communist sympathizers to overcome the phase II insurgency.¹⁵

Before free elections in April 1948, the National Security Council Report 8-1 (NSC 8-1) defined three broad objectives on the United States position towards Korea. The first objective was to establish a sovereign Korea free of foreign control. The second objective was to ensure that the national government could hold free elections. The third objective was to assist the Korean people in establishing a sound educational and economic system.¹⁶ In May 1948, South Koreans elected Syngman Rhee President and inaugurated the newly founded Republic of Korea (ROK) government. Conversely, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) elected Kim Il Sung as Premier effectively creating two hostile governments in one country. Kim Il Sung then began to discuss tactics with Mao Zedong as well as Joseph Stalin who sent Russian military

¹⁴ Mao Zedong, *Mao Tse-Tung on Guerrilla Warfare*, ed. Samuel B. Griffith (Washington D.C. : U.S. Marine Corps, 1989), 21.

¹⁵ Allan Reed Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951 : They Came from the North* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 11-12.

¹⁶ United States Secretary of State, "A Report to the National Security Council Report Number (8-1) " (Washington D.C.: U.S. GPO, 1949), 1-2.

advisors to prepare North Korean forces for an invasion into South Korea.¹⁷ While Kim Il Sung talked tactics, the United States began the withdrawal of 20,000 occupation forces leaving the Republic of Korea with 57,000 forces and an additional 6,200 in the coast guard with a plan to build a reserve land force of 100,000 through conscription.¹⁸

In March 1949, National Security Council Report 8-1 (NSC 8-1) provided a reassessment of the United States position on Korea. The report assessed the North Korean Army strength to be 75,000 to 95,000 personnel equipped with Soviet weapons and material. The NSC also assessed that disengagement from Korea could result in an overthrow of the South Korean government and discussed three courses of action to take towards South Korea. The first course of action, to abandon Korea, would result in irreparable damage to the reputation of the United States. The second, to guarantee the unconditional support to Korea, committed United States forces to maintain a military presence in Korea, and risked the inability of the United States to engage in other potential conflict against the Soviets. The third course of action, which was the one ultimately selected, to extend the withdrawal of the United States forces through June 1949, would buy more time for the South Korean forces to train, organize, and reduce the risks of Communist domination of the south.¹⁹

General Omar Nelson Bradley, then the Army Chief of Staff, on the eve of the withdrawal in June 1949, was concerned that North Korea would invade South Korea after the withdrawal of United States forces. As a result, he developed a course of action that included a composite of UN military forces to intervene in Korea in the event of an attack. However, Bradley and the Joint Chiefs met and decided not to push this matter again with the NSC and the

¹⁷ Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951 : They Came from the North*, 12.

¹⁸ Allan Reed Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950 : A House Burning* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 213.

¹⁹ United States Secretary of State, "A Report to the National Security Council Report Number (8-1)", 12-13.

United States went forward with the withdrawal.²⁰ General Bradley, named Chairman of the Joint Chiefs in August 1949, based his final decision to withdraw forces from Korea on the statement of Major General Charles Bolte, the Director of the Plans and Operations Division, Department of the Army on June 16, 1949.²¹ While the historical record contains contradictory explanations of the degree to which these reports exaggerated South Korean capability, the following information provides a basis for understanding General Bradley's decision to withdraw. In congressional testimony, MG Bolte explained to Congress that the Korean Government had established the military capability to defend itself against the North Koreans and that the small presence of United States Forces had fulfilled their role in maintaining the peace in Korea. He stated that an advisory group rather than combat forces would better support the Korean Army, auxiliary forces, and coast guard with assistance in training, education, and development. On June 17, 1949, MG Bolte responded to a question by Mr. Lodge of the House of Representatives inquiring to the validity of an article in Time Magazine, in which the future KMAG Director BG Roberts made estimates of up to 300,000 Soviet trained soldiers operated in North Korea. MG Bolte stated that the estimates were an exaggeration based on his daily reports.²² The U.S. also believed that withdrawing forces from Korea would result in more troops available to Japan to focus on the defense of the Pacific region.²³ Consequently, General MacArthur's FECOM withdrew the remaining divisions totaling twenty-thousand soldiers from the Korean Peninsula by the end of June 1949.²⁴

²⁰ Scnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year*, 50-51.

²¹ United States Congress House Committee on Foreign Affairs, "H.R. 5330."

²² Scnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year*, 35.

²³ Allan Reed Millett, *The Korean War* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, 2007), 12-13.

²⁴ Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu : (June-November 1950)*, 17.

Contrary to the earlier optimistic reporting on the South Korean capabilities and the exaggerated North Korean capabilities, the semi-annual reports later submitted in June 1950 by BG Robert's KMAG presented a pessimistic picture. By June 1950, KMAG certified sixteen battalions as trained at the battalion level, thirty battalions certified at the company level, and seventeen battalions certified at the platoon level. KMAG rated only four of fifty-three South Korean infantry battalions at seventy percent combat ready. The rest rated between forty-five to fifty percent combat-ready on average due to a lack of trained leaders, technicians, and equipment shortages. The reports also disclosed that the North Koreans possessed a significant combat power advantage in terms of aircraft, tanks, and artillery over the South Koreans.²⁵ BG Robert's official assessment, June 1950, supported statements by John J. Muccio's, Ambassador to Korea, who estimated that South Korean forces could not defeat an attack by the superior Korean People's Army.²⁶ Reports by KMAG claimed Korean officers and soldiers lacked leadership, initiative, and tactical competence.²⁷ General Matthew Ridgway, the Commander of the United Nations Command (UNC), later summarized the Republic of Korea Army's problem, "It was not willingness to fight or courage in battle that was lacking on the ROK side, so much as intensive training, and good leadership."²⁸

²⁵ Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950 : A House Burning*, 252. For more information on the combat ratios between North and South Korea, refer to Table B in the appendix.

²⁶ Glenn Paige, "1950: Truman's Decision: The United States Enters the Korean War" (Chelsea House Publishers, 1970). "In general, the official reports of the Korean Military Advisory Group under Brigadier General William L. Roberts tended to underestimate North Korean capabilities and to overestimate those of South Korea. By contrast a June 9 statement by Ambassador Muccio in support of a request for Korean aid subsequently proved to be accurate and prophetic (Doc. 6). His estimate was discounted in Washington as an example of the special pleading normal when an ambassador identifies himself with the interests of a nation to which he is accredited."

²⁷ Alfred Hartmann Hausrath, Office Johns Hopkins University. Operations Research, and Army United States. Dept. of the, *The KMAG Advisor : Role and Problems of the Military Advisor in Developing an Indigenous Army for Combat Operations in Korea* (Chevy Chase, Md.: Operations Research Office, Johns Hopkins University, 1957), 16-17.

²⁸ Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War* (Princeton: Collectors Reprints, 1967), 10.

Nonetheless, on 20 June 1950, General Joseph L. Collins, the Army Chief of Staff, consulted Brigadier General Roberts in Tokyo about the readiness of the South Korean Army on Roberts's trip back to the United States before his retirement. BG Roberts claimed to Collins that the South Korean Army is the “best doggone shooting army outside the United States.”²⁹ These statements coincided to earlier statements made by BG Roberts to Frank Gibney of Time magazine claiming to say the “South Koreans had the best little army in Asia.”³⁰ Robert’s public comments contradicted his official KMAG reports published in June 1950. His public comments did not reflect the reality that it would take time to transform a nation held subservient and without leadership roles under Japanese occupation to a nation that could defend itself against a battle-hardened opponent. Over the past thirty-years, Koreans were restricted to agricultural roles, all leadership and the Japanese performed technological roles. This left Korea as an underdeveloped nation of farmers with no leadership experience, initiative, or material support to transform to a military force.³¹

Meanwhile, the Truman Doctrine had essentially eliminated Korea from the United States strategic interests in an effort to consolidate limited resources for use against the Soviet threat.³² As a result, in a speech to the National Press Club in January 1950, Mr. Dean Acheson, the United States Secretary of State, highlighted Korea as being outside the realm of the United States strategic interests thus effectively saying the United States would not challenge Communist aggression in Korea.³³

²⁹ Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950 : A House Burning*, 251.

³⁰ Ibid., 251.

³¹ Alfred Hartmann Hausrath, *The KMAG Advisor: Role and Problems of the Military Advisor in Developing an Indigenous Army for Combat Operations in Korea* (Chevy Chase, Md.: Johns Hopkins University, 1957), 16-17.

³² Scnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year*, 50.

³³ Ibid., 52.

Not surprisingly then, the Korean War began on Sunday June 25, 1950 when Kim Il Sung, acting with support from Stalin and Mao, attacked an unprepared South Korean military that quickly dissolved under the enormous pressure applied by the KPA. The North Koreans assumed incorrectly that the United States lacked the capacity to project forces from Japan to Korea in time to stop the Korean People's Army from securing Pusan. Kim Il Sung also assumed he could defeat the Republic of Korea's military and secure South Korea in eight weeks as long as the United States did not intervene.³⁴ Ultimately, United States forces did arrive on the Korean Peninsula before the KPA could completely secure the South, but unprepared to fight in a limited war.

Evolution and Usage of Contemporary Doctrine

In order to assess General MacArthur's ability as an operational artist, it is necessary to compare the Army doctrine of the Korean War era, the 1949 version of the Field Service Regulations (FSR), with current doctrine. While operational art is a term first coined in the 1986 version of FM 100-5, *Operations*, an examination of the 1949 version of the FSR contains language which, when compared to modern doctrine, indicates a degree of operational thinking.³⁵ This examination begins by analyzing the strategic context in which the Army developed the 1949 Army doctrine. Then, a comparison of the 1949 Army doctrine with modern doctrine demonstrates an evolutionary linkage between the tactical concepts of 1949 and modern ideas of operational art. By evaluating these terms within the documents produced by General MacArthur and the FECOM staff, we can reveal operational thinking by General MacArthur.

A discussion on the policy decisions will be useful to understand the theories that influenced the evolution of the 1949 doctrine. With President Truman's policy of containment

³⁴ Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951 : They Came from the North*, 12.

³⁵ Bruce Menning, *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art*, ed. Michael D. Krause and Cody R. Phillips (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GPO, 2005), 15.

following World War II, National Security Council Report 68 (NSC 68) assessed the most effective strategy against Communism as a nuclear strategy.³⁶ This report, generated at the request of President Truman in 1950, highlighted the most likely threats to national security and objectives of those threats. For example, the report depicted the Kremlin as the gravest threat to national security and free society in general with its two specific objectives including the subversion of non-Soviet states to slavery and world domination. In response to the Soviet threat and objectives, NSC 68 recommended a counter objective to reduce the Soviet global threat through partnerships throughout the free world based on military and economic strength.³⁷ President Truman ordered further analysis of NSC 68 by the Bureau of the Budget due to the lack of information on costs and emphasis on a military approach.³⁸ Ultimately, this report resulted in a military arms race with the Soviets. With the knowledge of the Soviet development of nuclear weapons, President Truman assumed that in the future that a war fought by bombers delivering nuclear weapons would be the most decisive way to defeat the Soviets.³⁹ President Truman was interested in eliminating redundancies in the Air Force and the Army and proposed military reforms projected to save millions in defense expenditures, most of which were at the expense of the Army.⁴⁰ Although the Soviets detonated a nuclear weapon in September 1949, staying in line with policy, the Army staff maintained the belief that the World War II doctrine enabled conventional ground forces to outmaneuver and destroy the enemy following a nuclear attack by the Air Force. The Air Force would soften the battlefield through nuclear bombs and the Army would occupy and destroy the enemy. This theory created indifference towards the use of ground

³⁶ Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950 : A House Burning*, 238.

³⁷ U.S. National Security Council, "NSC-68 Report to Truman," (Washington D.C.: U.S. GPO, 1950), 63.

³⁸ Ibid., 1. Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951 : They Came from the North*, 66.

³⁹ Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951 : They Came from the North*, 55-57.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 56.

forces at the national level; as a result, doctrine remained unchanged between World War II and the Korean conflict.⁴¹

In line with the doctrine, at the start of the invasion General MacArthur recommended the use of nuclear weapons to President Truman on Chinese airfields harboring North Korean fighter aircraft. Although President Truman considered this request, he denied the request to prevent crossing the tipping point of Soviet intervention.⁴² The Army staff never considered the political constraints that would limit the Army to fight a ground war without the use of nuclear weapons. Thus, the Army did not prepare for a limited war.⁴³ Additionally, the Korean terrain provided another obstacle to fighting a World War II maneuver style of warfare. Mountains, narrow valleys, and rice fields coupled with the annual monsoon season further limited mechanized troop and logistical maneuver.⁴⁴ The enemy exploited the advantage of the terrain to supplement conventional tactics with human infiltrations much like the Japanese during World War II.⁴⁵ In spite of the enemy advantages and the political and doctrinal limitations placed upon General MacArthur, he understood that the North Korean forces were also limited by the terrain as well as by shortfalls in air and maritime assets. Thus, MacArthur directed the Eighth United States Army to hold the line at Pusan.⁴⁶

General MacArthur employed the 1949 Field Service Regulations, *Operations*, part of the Army Field Manual (FM) Series 100-5, to provide the base of tactical knowledge that the FECOM used during the onset of the Korean War. Prescriptive in nature, the doctrine emphasized

⁴¹ Walter E. Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine: From the American Revolution to the War on Terror* (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 2011), 164.

⁴² Ibid., 164.

⁴³ Ridgway, *The Korean War*, 11.

⁴⁴ Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu : (June-November 1950)*, 2.

⁴⁵ Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine: From the American Revolution to the War on Terror*, 165.

⁴⁶ MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 346.

using linear tactics to create the effect of mass. Baron Antoine-Henri Jomini, a general in both the French and Russian Armies during the Napoleonic era, wrote about interior and exterior lines of operations. Jomini's influence on linear and mathematical tactics is apparent in FM 100-5, *Operations*, as the doctrine emphasized mass at a single point through the supremacy of the infantry. Interior lines enable a force to move against an enemy center of gravity in a shorter time than the enemy could assemble a greater force to oppose it. On the other hand, exterior lines enable simultaneous operations on an enemy's exposed flanks or masses.⁴⁷ General MacArthur used interior lines to delay the enemy at Pusan and exterior lines to catch the enemy unprepared at Inchon. FM 100-5 uses Jomini's scientific approach to focus on battlefield geometry yet misses the conceptual linkage addressed by Prussian General Carl von Clausewitz in his colossal work, *On War*, written in 1832.

Clausewitz emphasizes intellectual qualities such as critical thinking, discernment, and the importance of understanding the strategic nature of war. "So long as no acceptable theory, no intelligent analysis of the conduct of war exists, routine methods will tend to take over at the highest levels."⁴⁸ For the most part, tactics at the Pusan Perimeter bear a resemblance to tactics of World War I, with entrenched Infantry holding ground.⁴⁹ Clausewitz writes of the paradoxical trinity of violence, hatred, and enmity to understand the basic principles behind war subject to the interplay of chance and subordinate to policy. Absent from the 1949 doctrine is the linkage back to strategy. FM 100-5, *Operations*, a doctrine written more Jominian in its approach towards warfare, does not account for Clausewitz's intangibles such as the reality of chaos, complexity, and friction that frequents the battlefield. Rather, the doctrine uses the time-tested concepts of the

⁴⁷ U.S. Department of Defense, "Planners Handbook for Operational Design Version 1," (Washington DC: Joint Staff J-7, 2011), 26.

⁴⁸ Clausewitz, Howard, and Paret, *On War*, 154.

⁴⁹ Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine: From the American Revolution to the War on Terror*, 165.

decisive battle to attempt to impose control on the battlefield.⁵⁰ FM 100-5, Operations relies on the authoritative system of command to execute mission orders yet misses the genius of the staff's analysis of the operating environment to simplify Clausewitz's fog and friction.⁵¹

General MacArthur used Clausewitz's conceptual thinking combined with doctrinal concepts to provide a common language to convey his strategy to his commanders. From the 1949 version of FM 100-5, *Operations*, the term objective most closely translates to the modern term of end-state.⁵² An *objective* represents the selection of intermediate or tactical goals whose attainment contributes to the success of the commander through the most effective employment of resources. The selection of the intermediate objective, based on intelligence, links to the ultimate objective and in modern terms, the ultimate objective is the commander's end state. Today, unity of command ensures the nesting of objectives across the war fighting functions towards the attainment of the ultimate objective.⁵³

Despite the rise of tank warfare as a means to penetrate enemy defenses during World War II, the infantry persisted as the main offensive fighting force supported by artillery, air, and tank support for maneuver.⁵⁴ FM 100-5 stressed the importance of offensive operations to destroy the enemy's main forces through the forms of offensive maneuver known as the envelopment and the penetration. General MacArthur made famous the concept of the envelopment through amphibious operations at Inchon, however, South Korean forces also used the envelopment to disperse the enemy and force him to fight on several fronts. The ROK used this tactic assisted by

⁵⁰ Ibid., 88.

⁵¹ Clausewitz, Carl Von. *On War* Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. (Oxford and Stanford University 1984), 88-89.

⁵² U.S. Army, "Field Manual 3-0 *Operations* Change 1," G-6.

⁵³ U.S. Army, "Field Manual 100-5 *Operations*," ed. HQDA, Field Service Regulations (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1949), pgph 97.

⁵⁴ Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine: From the American Revolution to the War on Terror*, 162.

artillery to close with and destroy the enemy.⁵⁵ For example, the ROK Seventeenth Regiment used the envelopment to capture both enemy and guerilla fighters controlling a choke point west of Sangju.⁵⁶ A support by fire attack attempted to move the enemy away from his defenses while the mobile force moved towards the enemy rear. Maneuver including mobility, surprise, and air superiority increased the chance of success to encircle the enemy. Offensive actions used the envelopment to move away from enemy strengths and created the effect of mass at weak points.⁵⁷

The penetration served as a contingency operation to the envelopment when offensive forces lacked the ability to conduct the envelopment or the enemy became overextended. During the penetration, the mobile reserve becomes the decisive effort to achieve the objective.⁵⁸ The penetration emphasized depth at the risk of exposing the attacker's flanks mitigated by using air and artillery to protect the flanks.

In 1949, combined arms emphasized the importance of the integration of infantry, armor, and air support to attack until the enemy resistance is broken.⁵⁹ The use of combined arms underscored the indirect approach by attacking gaps in the enemy strength. The commander could exploit enemy weak points through the mobilization of the reserves.⁶⁰ Logistics support enabled operational reach by aggressively pushing supplies by ground and air.⁶¹ However, logistical formations also became a target of the enemy subject to the infiltration tactics of the North

⁵⁵ Ibid., 163.

⁵⁶ Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu : (June-November 1950)*, 194.

⁵⁷ U.S. Army, "Field Manual 100-5 Operations."

⁵⁸ Ibid., pgph 394-95.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pgph 400.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 255.

Koreans. FM 100-5 maintained a ground-based approach emphasizing the principles of combined arms and maneuver.⁶²

The official publication of FM 101-5 in July 1950, *Staff Organization and Procedures*, included an updated planning process, estimates process, and methodology for evaluation of information within the decision-making process. FM 101-5 emphasized the staff's evaluation of the threat and use of a planning process instead of the orders process alone.⁶³ The planning process included the planning, analysis, and added the commander's estimate, which described how the commander developed his concept as a broad course of action selected to accomplish the mission. Following analysis from the staff, the commander makes a decision on the resources available to accomplish the mission. From this decision, an order would follow providing a detailed narrative of the course of action to attain the desired result. The term, desired result indicated that the doctrine included a plan working towards an end-state. The commander's estimate emphasized the importance of understanding the "intent of his superior" ensuring the linkage of tactical actions to the commander's intent.⁶⁴ The doctrine highlighted the importance of planning as an ongoing process that anticipated "probable courses of action" based on "changing conditions."⁶⁵ In this case, the staff verified the information and provided estimates for the commander to use as he refined his course of action. Furthermore, the doctrine implied the need for the staff to take initiative and anticipate changes in the operating environment versus waiting for directives. The doctrine detailed the importance of the staff sharing information about the

⁶² Ibid., pgph 624.

⁶³ Christopher Paparone, *U.S. Army Decisionmaking Past Present and Future* (Washington DC: U.S. GPO, 2001), 46.

⁶⁴ U.S. Army, "Field Manual 101-5 *Staff Operations*," (Fort Leavenworth: Command and General Staff College, 1950), 61.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 67.

enemy and friendly capabilities through coordination to ensure “continuity of thought and effort.”⁶⁶

To draw out the parallels to operational art between the 1949 and current doctrine, the modern definitions of key terms provide a foundation of knowledge of operational art that did not exist in 1949. The definition of *operational art* from Army Doctrine Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, is “the pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose.”⁶⁷ This definition links tactics to strategy, a linkage that did not exist in 1949, though the linkage between the commander and the concept of the operation did exist through the term objective. The modern day aim of operational art is to develop a campaign plan, which orients on the commander’s understanding of the operational environment and his vision of the desired end state. The *operational environment* is the “composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander.”⁶⁸ The *end state*, similar to the objective of the commander’s concept in 1949, “is a desired future condition represented by the expressed conditions that the commander wants to exist when an operation ends.”⁶⁹ With an understanding of the current conditions and end state, the commander must comprehend the operational problem and typically centers his efforts on the *center of gravity*, which doctrine defines as the source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act.⁷⁰ General MacArthur’s understanding of the operational environment allowed him to formulate a stratagem

⁶⁶ Ibid., 67-70.

⁶⁷ Headquarters Department of the Army, “Army Doctrine Publication 3-0,” in *Army Doctrine Reference Publication* (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 2011), 9.

⁶⁸ Joint Chiefs of Staff United States, “Joint Publication 3-0,” in *Operations* (Joint Electronic Library. Washington: Government Printing Office, 11 August 2011), GL-14.

⁶⁹ U.S. Army, “Field Manual 3-0 *Operations* Change 1,” 128.

⁷⁰ United States, “Joint Publication 3-0,” GL-6.

using deception and harassment, which he assumed would cause the North Korean Army to deploy on a horizontal line versus continuing to drive southward in columns.⁷¹ Thus, General MacArthur's campaign plan would slow the enemy advance allowing him more time to build forces for the counter-attack.

With an understanding of the problem and the center of gravity, the commander possessed could develop an operational approach based around a defeat mechanism. A *defeat mechanism* is “the method through which friendly forces accomplish their mission against enemy opposition.”⁷² Although, the contemporary 49’ doctrine did not speak specifically in terms of defeat mechanisms, General MacArthur used the term dislocation to describe how he would defeat the North Korean Army. General MacArthur realized that movement southward extended the North Korean lines of supply rendering the enemy subject to dislocation.⁷³ General MacArthur designed his approach based on this defeat mechanism. Other modern day terms provide a framework to show how General MacArthur understood and visualized his approach. A *decisive point* is a geographic place, specific key event, critical factor, or function that, when acted upon, allow commanders to gain a marked advantage over an adversary or contribute materially to achieving success.⁷⁴ The terms *tempo* and *reach* describe the effects that General MacArthur achieved. “*Tempo* is the relative speed and rhythm of military operations over time with respect to the enemy.”⁷⁵ “*Operational reach* is the distance and duration across which a unit can successfully employ military capabilities.”⁷⁶ These modern day doctrinal terms produced

⁷¹ MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 336.

⁷² U.S. Army, "Field Manual 3-0 *Operations* Change 1," 129.

⁷³ MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 350.

⁷⁴ United States, "Joint Publication 3-0," GL-9.

⁷⁵ U.S. Army, "Field Manual 3-0 *Operations* Change 1," 135.

⁷⁶ United States, "Joint Publication 3-0," GL-15.

seventy-two years after the Korean War gives rise to General MacArthur's operational thoughts in 1950.

The modern concept of *Unified Land Operations*, similar to the concept of *combined arms* from the Field Manual 100-5, *Operations* 1949 allows ground forces to "seize, retain, and exploit the initiative to gain and maintain a position of relative advantage in sustained land operations in order to create the conditions for favorable conflict resolution."⁷⁷ Today, United States forces use *Decisive Action* to achieve the effect of fighting Unified Land Operations. Decisive Action: "the conduct of decisive and sustainable land operations by the Army through the simultaneous combination of offense, defense, and stability operations (or defense support of civil authorities) appropriate to the mission and environment."⁷⁸ In retrospect, General MacArthur's actions were decisive by exploiting the enemy's weakness, long lines of communication, predictable tactics, and limited joint capability through simultaneous offense, defense, and stability operations to seize the initiative.

Based on the doctrine of 1949-50, operational thinking existed in the principles of war. British theorist Liddell Hart, espoused the idea of strategy to bring about a position of continuous advantage on the battlefield through lowered enemy resistance. Hart emphasized two principles following World War I. The first principle, the indirect approach, focused on avoiding direct attacks against a prepared enemy to produce a decision with minimal fighting. The second principle dislocate, aimed to separate the enemy forces, upset his organization, endanger his supplies, and endanger his route to retreat.⁷⁹ FM 100-5 emphasized the use of maneuver through

⁷⁷ Department of the Army Headquarters, "Army Doctrine Publication 3-0," (Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2011), 5.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 5-9.

⁷⁹ Liddell B.H. Hart, *Strategy* (New York: Praeger, 1967), 324-26.

combined arms to attain an objective (ultimate objective) similar to Liddell-Hart's application of military means to meet the aim of policy and bring about favorable conditions.⁸⁰

Overall, the doctrine of 1949-50, offers tactical cause and effect solutions to problems designed for maneuver warfare in Europe. The doctrine of 1949-50 demonstrates linear solutions to combat and does not address the complexities of the operational environment and interdependencies of Clausewitz' triad on the human dimensions of war.⁸¹ As described by Jomini, Clausewitz, and Liddell-Hart, General MacArthur's, as a practitioner of operational art, integrated the science of the doctrine of 1949-50 with his conceptual linkage of tactics to strategy in a systematic approach to surprise, and disrupt the enemy.⁸²

Planning and preparation by the North Koreans

Two schools of Communist thought influenced the evolution of the North Korean leadership and their decision to attack South Korea. The Soviet Kaspen School emphasized a direct approach using military action against the enemy to achieve political goals. This style became the prevailing North Korean model of warfare emphasizing direct action such as penetration and envelopment of the enemy. The Yenan School from Mao emphasized political indoctrination of the lower or working class peasants using them to carry on insurgency operations (guerilla warfare). Kim Il Sung used the Kaspen method to establish a direct military strategy to the invasion.⁸³ This indoctrination enabled the conscription of males between the ages of eighteen to thirty five for military service.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Ibid., 321.

⁸¹ U.S. Army, "Field Manual 100-5 Operations," pgph 835.

⁸² U.S. Army, "SAMS Art of Design Version 2," (Fort Leavenworth: SAMS, 2010), 70.

⁸³ Zedong, *Mao Tse-Tung on Guerrilla Warfare*, 8.

⁸⁴ Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950 : A House Burning*, 188.

The request to invade South Korea, originated with Kim Il Sung in Pyong Yang, went through Beijing to Moscow before any military movement began. This linkage of the political and military leadership illustrates the unity of effort between Russia, China, and North Korea to develop a unified set of military objectives.⁸⁵ Using simultaneity and depth, North Korea dispersed Rhee's forces and affected their preparedness for war. Communist partisan organizations ensured that Rhee's forces remained dispersed by forcing the South Korean Army to conduct police actions against insurgent operations. The Korean People's Army also dispersed the Republic of Korea Army (ROKA) forces by conducting border raids that reduced training time from the untested South Korean forces. Inexperienced ROK military forces did not organize or train effectively due to the calculated efforts of Kim Il Sung. The withdrawal of United States combat forces and the loss of seven thousand security forces killed during the Communist purging added to the dispersion. Moreover, before the invasion, the DPRK constabulary forces elevated cross-border attacks along the thirty-eighth parallel to reduce the ability of South Korea to mass combat forces along the border.⁸⁶

In March, Kim Il Sung assured Stalin and Mao that the Americans would not interfere. Stalin, with Mao's consent, approved the initial invasion plan.⁸⁷ Fully supported by Stalin and Mao, Kim Il Sung received the direct support of 150 Russian officers and enlisted cadre to train his army in armor tactics. Planning and training started in April 1950 for an invasion in July 1950, but Kim Il Sung moved up the invasion date to June based upon the start of the rainy season. As a diversion, Kim Il Sung called for peace talks and sent four North Korean delegates to Panmunjom. Rhee rejected the talks and arrested the delegates. On 12 June, North Korean corps, division, and artillery commanders attended a coordination meeting to solidify war

⁸⁵ Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951 : They Came from the North*, 45.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 48.

preparations. On 15 June, Ambassador Shtykov reported the completion of attack preparations to Stalin followed by the order sent to corps and division commanders to formalize the concept of “Operation Preemptive Strike.”⁸⁸

The political-military government of North Korea included a strong group of aggressive planners balanced against the idealistic Kim Il Sung. Stalin sent Lieutenant General Vasiliyev, an armored force commander at Kursk and Stalingrad, as well as one thousand trainers to lead the preparation of the Korean People’s Army for the invasion. The North Korean staff consisted of Koreans who fought with the Communist during World War II of which fifty generals of Korean descent who had previously obtained Soviet citizenship. Ten additional North Korean generals fought for the People’s Liberation Army, adding to the depth of the Communist pool of experience.⁸⁹

This divergence of leadership between Kim Il Sung’s and LTG Vasiliyev’s staffs caused some confusion on the appropriate means to attack South Korea. Stalin wanted the attack to occur sequentially so that they could accuse South Korea of aggression. However, Kim Il Sung asserted that surprise was paramount. Stalin agreed and approved the simultaneous use of deception east at Ongjin to enable a surprise penetration by the main effort at Kaesong.⁹⁰

The Soviet and North Korean leadership developed a campaign plan that culminated in the collapse of Seoul through a double envelopment by the North Korean I and II Corps. Kim Il Sung envisioned that the collapse of Seoul would result in South Korean forces culminating through dislocation and destruction of their will to fight. He also integrated partisan forces from the south to add the operational effect of simultaneity to shape the attack and seize targets in the southwest areas of Mokpo, Kunsan, and Taejon. Partisan elements in the Taebak Mountains

⁸⁸ Ibid., 45-49.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 51.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 52.

would capture Taegu in the east and then together the forces would achieve the decisive point of the operation, the port of Pusan.⁹¹ The biggest risk to the plan, as seen by Kim Il Sung, was that the South Korean Army would intercept invasion plans from thousands of defectors and preempt the invasion with an attack of their own.⁹²

Combat actions: June to September 1950

Already reacting to conditions set by the Korean People's Army, General Headquarters (GHQ) FECOM learned of the invasion six and one-half hours after it started on June 25, 1950 at 0400 and notified Washington soon thereafter. In response to this notification, Bradley advised President Truman to draw the line against communist aggression in Korea. Bradley believed that if Korea fell to Communism, it would be a tipping point for further Communist aggression and cripple the credibility of the United States across the globe. President Truman authorized the use of air and naval assets to escort ships and protect United States personnel evacuated from Seoul.⁹³

GHQ FECOM, located in Tokyo and away from the war, did not understand the lethality of the combat power possessed by the North Koreans and the fact they needed to relocate to Korea to understand the real problems they faced in terms of the enemy and terrain.⁹⁴ The South Koreans could not stop the North Korean advance, and they enveloped Seoul in three days. By the end of June, only 54,000 of the original 95,000 South Korean soldiers (including combat and non-combat soldiers) remained. The North Koreans killed or captured many of the South Korean soldiers, while others went missing.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950 : A House Burning*, 188.

⁹² Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951 : They Came from the North*, 52.

⁹³ Scnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year*, 69.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 103.

⁹⁵ Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu : (June-November 1950)*, 35.

The North Koreans held a combat power advantage over the South Koreans in terms of their larger and more experienced army and the superiority of their equipment. The North Korean People's Army possessed 150 medium tanks while the ROKA lacked any armored vehicles. The Korean People's Army fielded three times the amount of artillery and outdistanced the ROKA artillery by nearly 6,000 yards. The North Koreans also operated a tactical air force while the South did not. The North's army averaged 89,000 combat troops against 69,000 combat troops on the south side of the border.⁹⁶ Table B further defines the North Korean combat power advantage as reported by the Far East Intelligence Officer and the Korean Military Advisory Group who reported in June 1950 the North Korean possessed an armored capability and completed combined arms training at the battalion level.⁹⁷ In contrast to the North Korean army trained at the battalion level, KMAG certified only sixteen of sixty-three South Korean battalions as trained.⁹⁸

On 27 June, three days after the initial notification of the invasion, General MacArthur's General Headquarters Advanced Command and Liaison Group led by Major General Church, deployed to Korea and advised General MacArthur to prioritize assets to defend the Han River from the southern bank. General MacArthur flew into Suwon, on 29 June 1950. After observing South Korean forces retreating southward he ordered air and naval assets to conduct operations against North Korean military targets immediately while concluding that the United States must deploy ground forces to Korea. "The only assurance for the holding of the present line, and the ability to recover following the lost ground is through the introduction of United States ground combat forces in the Korean battlefield. To continue to utilize the forces of our Air and Navy

⁹⁶ Ibid., 17.

⁹⁷ Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951 : They Came from the North*, 32.

⁹⁸ Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950 : A House Burning*, 252.

without an effective ground element cannot be decisive.”⁹⁹ Based on his successes with amphibious operations during World War II, General MacArthur intuitively began visualizing a potential operational approach to the problem. In January 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson labeled South Korea as a nation of “little strategic worth.”¹⁰⁰ President Truman decided Korea was a good place to draw the line against Communist aggression in Korea based on General Bradley’s recommendation to contain the Soviet’s in Korea. Truman then approved the deployment of ground troops to Korea on 29 June 1950.¹⁰¹ In essence, General MacArthur visualized a defeat- mechanism necessary to destroy the North Korean forces upon his arrival to Suwon. He knew that he required time to allow for the buildup of forces at Pusan and needed South Korean Army forces to hold the North Koreans north of the Han River. Therefore, he directed the Fifth United States Air Force and United States Seventh Fleet to support the South Korean forces in their defense of the Han River.

On 29 June, General Stratemeyer, Commander Far East Air Forces, transitioned from supporting non-combatant operations of United States personnel to conducting offensive operations. That day, the Fifth United States Air Force, flew 172 close air support sorties in support of the South Korean defense along the Han River. However, friendly planes mistakenly attacked South Korean forces prompting the requirement for better air to ground coordination. Therefore, Fifth United States Air-Force deployed two tactical air control parties from Japan to Korea on 5 July to resolve the immediate issue of the lack of air to ground coordination.¹⁰² The North Korean Air-Force adapted to the emergence of the UN forces ability to provide close air support coordination and countered it by timing when United States flights from Japan required

⁹⁹ MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 334.

¹⁰⁰ Scnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year*, 52.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 35.

¹⁰² Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu : (June-November 1950)*, 51-52.

fuel and launched attacks on the South Korean ground forces during that time. As a result, the Fifth United States Air Force initiated a counter-air campaign to eliminate enemy resistance of the North's air forces and gain air superiority. The combined UN counter-air campaign focused on the destruction of enemy runways, hangars, and aircraft destroying the small but effective North Korean Air Force. This resulted in the UN gaining the advantage of air supremacy and freedom of movement for UN forces.¹⁰³

On 30 June 1950, the United States Department of State advised General MacArthur of the UN mandate to direct military efforts towards the restoration of South Korea to the first territorial standing prior to the start of the war.¹⁰⁴ Major General Edward Mallory Almond, FECOM's Chief of Staff, recommended to General MacArthur to send a US infantry task force to Korea with the purpose to delay the North Korean advance. On the evening of 30 June, Colonel Richard W. Stephens the commanding officer of the Twenty First Infantry Division woke up Lieutenant Colonel Charles B. Smith to inform him that he would take his battalion minus A and D Companies by air to Korea immediately and link up with Major General William Dean, Commander of the 24th Infantry Division. Task Force Smith, the name given to the maneuver element which included two infantry companies, two mortar platoons, and a recoilless rifle platoon under the command of LTC Smith. Task Force Smith consisted of five hundred and forty soldiers with the mission to delay the North Korean advance towards Pusan.

The success of General MacArthur's attempts to delay the North Koreans depended on the renewed efforts by a fractured ROKA, low on ammunition and without artillery, a combined United States and Korean air campaign, and the combat success of Task Force Smith.¹⁰⁵ Upon

¹⁰³ Robert Frank Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea 1950-1953* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1961), 103.

¹⁰⁴ Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu : (June-November 1950)*, 37.

¹⁰⁵ Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951 : They Came from the North*, 132.

arrival to Korea, General Dean's only guidance to Lieutenant Colonel Smith was to report to General Church.¹⁰⁶ General Church's only discussion with Lieutenant Colonel Smith included words to the effect that they just need a few men who will not run at the sight of tanks.¹⁰⁷ On 3 July, due to misguided air attacks by the Fifth United States Air Force on South Korean forces, General Church requested that all air missions be-flown north of the Han River. As a result, Task Force Smith received no air support. The cultural bias that the enemy would cower at American presence resulted in a hasty deployment of ill-prepared Soldiers without any anti-tank capabilities.

Lieutenant Colonel Smith, a World War II combat veteran, thought his chances of stopping a KPA Division were fair but also knew a mobile defense would require indirect fire, air support, and well trained troops. Task Force Smith deployed without the appropriate training and equipment required to halt a Russian style combined arms assault of infantry and artillery. In fact, no battalion within the United States Army possessed this capability.¹⁰⁸ From FM 100-5, 1940, *Operations*, a delaying action requires the protection of the flanks and the rear through the support of combat aviation.¹⁰⁹ Task Force Smith held no requisite equipment to delay an enemy with heavily armored tanks.¹¹⁰ FECOM traded analysis for speed by employing a force without ground or air support. General MacArthur allowed his WW II experiences, specifically during the recapture of the Philippines where the Japanese retreated to the hills upon the arrival of United States Forces, to influence his understanding of the situation. Believing the North Koreans would

¹⁰⁶ Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu : (June-November 1950)*, 61.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 61.

¹⁰⁸ Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951 : They Came from the North*, 137.

¹⁰⁹ U.S. Army, "Field Manual 100-5 Operations," 654-57.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 159.

react in the same way, he fell into the trap of confirmation bias.¹¹¹ FECOM might have fared far better if they followed their doctrine and weighed the risks and opportunities of employing Task Force Smith against the overall campaign plan. Rather General MacArthur chose to pursue a tactical victory. Today, the theorist Everett Dolman highlights that strategy achieves a “continuing advantage” not necessarily victory at the tactical level.¹¹² Giving the North Koreans an easy victory early on against the world’s preeminent fighting force set a strategic tempo that played into the mind of Mao when he decided the Chinese would enter the war.

General MacArthur revealed his cultural arrogance in his memoirs by his lack of appreciation for his North Korean foe in the statement “that arrogant display of strength.”¹¹³ General MacArthur explained later that this small contingent of United States Soldiers served to deceive the Korean People’s Army into thinking they covered for a much larger force. “I had hoped by that arrogant display of strength to fool the enemy into a belief that I had greater resources at my disposal than I did. This process provided ten days and forced the enemy to use his infantry early along the 150-mile front, with Suwon as the pivotal point.”¹¹⁴ Nonetheless, General MacArthur viewed Task Force Smith as a success.¹¹⁵ However, United States Soldiers left their dead, some wounded, and weapons on the battlefield as the enemy routed Army forces.¹¹⁶ This defeat, during the first series of United States combat operations, led General

¹¹¹ Manchester, *American Caesar: Douglas Macarthur, 1880-1964*, 430. Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*.

¹¹² Everett Dolman, “Pure Strategy Power and Policy in the Space and Information Age,” Frank Cass, <http://public.eblib.com/EBLPublic/PublicView.do?ptID=199699>.

¹¹³ MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 336.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 336.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 336.

¹¹⁶ Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu : (June-November 1950)*, 74.

MacArthur to appreciate the aggressive nature of the Korean People's Army and the importance of the unbiased analysis of the operational environment (OE).¹¹⁷

On 4 July, two full strength enemy divisions, the North Korean Third and Sixth Divisions crossed the Han River unexpectedly and moved south towards Pusan.¹¹⁸ Consequently, General MacArthur changed his plan, as he deployed the First Cavalry Division and Second Infantry Division early, and then requested more combat forces through President Truman. Meanwhile, the enemy deployed simultaneously west in Suwon, central near Wonju, and east at Samch'ok in an effort to seize the port of Pusan, the key port supporting United States force generation efforts. Pusan became the prize of a 200-kilometer race between the North Korean and United States forces. To delay the advance, General MacArthur deployed Major General Dean and the Twenty Fourth Infantry Division. The advanced party, the Thirty Fourth Infantry Regiment of the Twenty Fourth Division arrived in Pusan on 2 July and moved north by rail on 4 July to fight a delaying action from successive positions to provide time for follow-on forces to deploy and prepare for combat. On 6 July, the North Koreans forced the Twenty Fourth Division to withdraw further south. General MacArthur fully understood the capability of the threat that he described as "professional, well-equipped, and aggressive."¹¹⁹ On 13 July, the fighting near the Kum River ended quickly with the North Korean People's Army easily crossing the river and enveloping the lightly defended United States positions. The men fought poorly and withdrew to Taejon.¹²⁰

In Taejon, the Twenty Fourth Division needed to delay the enemy long enough for the First Cavalry Division to enter the fight. Dean positioned the Twenty Fourth Division, reinforced

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 8.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 55.

¹¹⁹ Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea 1950-1953*, 84.

¹²⁰ David Rees, *The Korean War: History and Tactics* (New York: Crescent Books : Distributed by Crown Publishers, 1984), 19.

with new Sherman tanks and 3.5-inch rockets, between the city and south of the Kum River. The battle began on 19 July, the division fought hard, and while losing 1,150 men, they provided two additional days for the First Cavalry Division to move into the fight.¹²¹ The enemy attacked with superior numbers in personnel, tanks, and artillery. They fixed the friendly forces with artillery or infantry and enveloped them on the flanks to destroy command posts and artillery positions. By blocking the roads, the Korean People's Army cut reinforcements, supply, and communications and isolated the United States forces. These forces did not possess enough combat power to create a reserve with only two battalions in each regiment, resulting in forces being cut-off.¹²² The Twenty Fourth Division understood their role in General MacArthur's operational design and fought valiantly buying time for the First Cavalry Division and Second Infantry Division to move into battle positions. In the meantime, Twenty Fourth Division stopped the Korean People's Army advance and established a secure hold on the Korean Peninsula.¹²³

By 22 July, both the First Cavalry Division and Second Infantry Division deployed into battle positions around Taejon in order to hold the Pusan Perimeter. Army transportation personnel worked around the clock receiving and distributing three hundred tons of critical equipment and supplies daily. Over two hundred and thirty ships arrived and two hundred and fourteen departed during the latter half of July, eliminating the need for airlifted supplies into Korea.¹²⁴ Logistical challenges included the availability of rail lines and ammunition. On 1 July, the United Nations controlled 1,404 miles of rail and by the end of July; the UN could operate roughly 431 miles of rail. Logisticians used the rail to carry unit replacements forward and

¹²¹ Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft, *America's First Battles, 1776-1965* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1986), 296.

¹²² Ibid., 299.

¹²³ Ibid., 296-97.

¹²⁴ Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu : (June-November 1950)*, 380.

casualties-rearward, increasing the operational reach and tempo of UN forces. Ammunition shortages and malfunctions from World War II vintage munitions halted operations in Taegu and UN forces went allocating fifty rounds per gun per day to twenty-five rounds per gun per day. As a result, General MacArthur sent urgent messages to Japan requesting ammunition as daily allocation for howitzer rounds ran desperately low, and some artillery units came out of the fight due to the lack of ammunition.¹²⁵ Although units fell short on some logistics commodities, the feat of projecting and supplying forces from Japan would eventually overwhelm the North Koreans through the sheer amount of material.

Prior to Pusan, UN forces seldom assembled sufficient forces to hold a continuous line beyond a battalion-sized element. Open UN flanks allowed the enemy to move through the hills, envelop UN forces, and isolate them.¹²⁶ Around the Pusan Perimeter, LTG Walker ordered UN forces to establish defensive positions behind the Naktong River. The perimeter consisted of 47,000 United States and 45,000 South Korean Army personnel. This effort resulted in more than a static defense as LTG Walker looked to defeat the attacking North Korean People's Army. Below the Naktong River, the use of air and improved logistics support shifted the tide of the tactical battle. By the end of July, the Fifth United States Air Force flew 8,600 sorties in close air support, interdiction, and strategic bombing and proved to be vital in preventing the Korean People's Army from penetrating the Pusan Perimeter.¹²⁷ Success during operations along the Pusan Perimeter marked a change in the UN character as allied forces formed a continuous front for the first time. General MacArthur's campaign plan set conditions to enable tactical

¹²⁵ Ibid., 431.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 255.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 256.

commanders to adapt, orient, and take action faster than the enemy could react, allowing time for forces generation, and the transition to offensive operations.¹²⁸

Analysis of the Elements of Operational Art

This analysis will attempt to confirm that General MacArthur raised the bar from the level of a practitioner of maneuver warfare, to an artist who understood the magnitude of the complex interdependencies within the operating environment to dislocate the enemy. Initially, General MacArthur attempted to superimpose his views on the operating environment through his hypothesis that North Korean forces would flee at the presence of United States forces. This hypothesis, tested by the employment of TF Smith, demonstrates FECOM's initial failure to perceive the mismatches between their discourse on war and its reality. General MacArthur did not understand the nature of the war that FECOM entered into until the enemy crushed his assumptions, which forced him to broaden his understanding of the enemy. Rather than reforming reality to conform to his perception, after the defeat of TF Smith, General MacArthur changed his discourse to meet the actual conditions on the ground.¹²⁹ Through discourse with his staff, General MacArthur devised a strategy using decisive action to seize the initiative and dominate the enemy.¹³⁰ Through the frame of the eleven elements of operational art described in Field Manual 3-0, Change 1, *Operations*, reveals General MacArthur's use of operational art during the early months of the Korean War.

In contrast to the “nuclear only” theory which drove the defense policy towards using the Air Force as the primary military component to deliver nuclear weapons to strike Soviet

¹²⁸ Antoine J. Bousquet, *The Scientific Way of War of Warfare: Order and Chaos on the Battlefields of Modernity* (Hurst & Co. Publ., 2008), 195.

¹²⁹ John A. Lynn, *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2003), 332.

¹³⁰ Headquarters, "Army Doctrine Publication 3-0," 5.

targets.¹³¹ General MacArthur's development of operational objectives provided FECOM with the purpose, direction, and motivation to delay the North Koreans and secure a foothold at Pusan to generate combat power at Pusan in preparation for future operations. General MacArthur targeted the North Korean supply and communication lines with multiple military capabilities in accordance with the 1949 FM 100-5, *Operations*, which references the objective as being a physical entity (troops, terrain, communications, or infrastructure). Ultimately, his solid foothold by Eighth United States Army at Pusan enabled General MacArthur to generate combat power for the counterattack while Tenth Corps forces physically cut the lines of communication at Inchon.

Clausewitz envisioned the culmination of the enemy by directing efforts against its means of resistance and source of will.¹³² General MacArthur's language indicated that he believed the enemy land forces were the center of gravity.¹³³ General MacArthur explained the need for "wresting the initiative from the enemy and thereby presenting the opportunity for a decisive blow."¹³⁴ The Joint Chiefs confirmed the enemy center of gravity in their directive on 27 September 1950, which directed General MacArthur to destroy the North Korean forces north of the thirty-eighth parallel.¹³⁵ The critical capabilities of the enemy land forces included its armor, artillery, and air assets. The critical requirements for the land forces included uninterrupted lines of communications and supply.¹³⁶ As the North Korean Army pushed further south, they

¹³¹ Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951 : They Came from the North*.

¹³² Clausewitz, Howard, and Paret, *On War*, 77.

¹³³ U.S. Army, "Field Manual 100-5 *Operations*," 376.

¹³⁴ MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 352.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 358. "Your military objective is the destruction of the North Korean armed forces. In attaining this objective, you are authorized to conduct military operations north of the thirty eighth parallel in Korea."

¹³⁶ Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea 1950-1953*, 85.

overextended their supply lines and revealed a critical vulnerability to ground and air interdiction.¹³⁷

According to FM 3-0, Ch. 1, *Operations*, the operational approach is the framework that the commander uses to link the current situation to the end state.¹³⁸ General MacArthur understood the enemy land forces were the center of gravity and envisioned a defeat mechanism to destroy the enemy land forces. General MacArthur planned to cut the enemy lines of supply to dislocate the enemy's main forces from their headquarters resulting in their disintegration.¹³⁹ Although the doctrine did not include the terms disintegration or dislocation, General MacArthur understood the effects that his operational approach would ultimately have on the physical and psychological well-being of the enemy forces.¹⁴⁰ Doctrine of the time described the purpose of military operations as the destruction of the enemy armed forces and its will to fight.¹⁴¹

General MacArthur's language indicated he viewed the operational problem as how to delay an enemy who already possessed the initiative and relative combat power advantage. The enemy possessed superior forces (experience and numbers of more than 2:1) and superior equipment (tanks, aircraft, and artillery) according to the Korean Military Advisory Group and United States embassy estimates in May and June of 1950 (Table B). A second problem included how to secure the Pusan Perimeter in order to generate enough combat power to launch a counteroffensive from Pusan. Third and the longer term problem included how does the FECOM

¹³⁷ MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 352.

¹³⁸ U.S. Army, "Field Manual 3-0 *Operations* Change 1," 7-6 through 7-8.

¹³⁹ MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 352.

¹⁴⁰ U.S. Army, "Field Manual 3-0 *Operations* Change 1."

¹⁴¹ U.S. Army, "Field Manual 100-5 *Operations*," 376.

destroy the enemy forces and restore the international border without tipping a total war with the Soviets or China?¹⁴²

The operational problem exposed the decisive points where General MacArthur expected to fight the enemy. A decisive point is a place, key event, factor, function, or anything that gives the commander an advantage over the enemy.¹⁴³ General MacArthur identified two decisive points. He viewed the first decisive point, as an event to delay the enemy and allow the buildup of the Twenty Fourth Division forces at Pusan. General MacArthur viewed the second decisive point, as the envelopment to cut the North Korean supply lines by the First Cavalry Division at Inchon (later to become the First Marine Division and the Second Infantry Division) to isolate the enemy from his lines of communication.¹⁴⁴ General MacArthur's recognition of the decisive point and his decision to mass forces north of Pusan bought time for the generation of additional combat power in Pusan. Additionally, his use of offensive actions to seize the initiative with the infantry to exploit gaps protected by armor and air support on the flanks proved lethal against the North Koreans.

In accordance with the joint phasing construct General MacArthur's strategic lines of operation started with forces and equipment deploying by rail from Yokomaha, Japan to the railhead at Sasebo and then by sea to Pusan. Known as the "Red Ball Express," these operations and the voyage took fifty-three hours.¹⁴⁵ Coalition forces organized within the Pusan Perimeter and prepared for the eventual counteroffensive. Simultaneously, remnants of the ROK First, Seventh, and Capital Divisions conducted a delaying action against the North Korean Third,

¹⁴² Scnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year*, ix.

¹⁴³ U.S. Army, "Field Manual 3-0 Operations Change 1," 7-9.

¹⁴⁴ Harry J. Middleton, *The Compact History of the Korean War* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1965), 103.

¹⁴⁵ Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu : (June-November 1950)*, 260.

Fourth, and Sixth Division's supported by Fifth United States Air-Force and United States Seventh Fleet trading space for time and allowing General MacArthur to generate additional ground forces through the Port of Pusan.¹⁴⁶ In short, General MacArthur used coalition forces to halt the opposition's advance and take advantage of time to build up his forces in Pusan.¹⁴⁷ Each day General MacArthur provided LTG Walker equated to more forces to conduct the counterattack. The envelopment by the First Marine Division and Second Infantry Division would shape the battlefield for the decisive operation, the counterattack of the Eighth United States Army. In addition, the UN conducted stability operations during all of these phases providing humanitarian assistance to thousands of refugees and displaced civilians to protect and prevent atrocities.¹⁴⁸

Eventually, the UN operations overwhelmed the North Koreans forces through its logistics effort. During the first month, in contrast to large combat losses because of direct combat with North Korean forces, the buildup of forces continued in Pusan. Two hundred tank crewmembers and twenty-one medium tanks arrived at the front lines in August with additional equipment on the way. As the Eighth United States Army began to fall back south of the Naktong River, the Fifth Regimental Combat Team arrived from Hawaii with fourteen additional Pershing tanks and the Five Fifty-Fifth Field Artillery Battalion, the “Triple Nickel.” The first of this element arrived in Masan the following morning. That same day, the Second Infantry Division, “Manchu,” arrived and staged in Pusan. The mere accumulation of equipment and supplies delivered through Pusan changed the tempo, reach, and depth giving the decisive combat power advantage to the UN forces.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 55.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 55.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 255.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 258-60.

The presence of non-combatants in the divisional areas resulted in a marked increase in theft, violence and posed a traffic barrier to maneuver forces. To deal with this, the UN planners included military police and civil affairs units in their planning and efforts to obtain, feed, and moved these civilians on trucks to the refugee holding area. Civil affairs coordinated the efforts of the Korean National Police, laborers, and medical personnel. The efficient processing of refugees at collection points and movement to camps by the United States Army and South Korean police prevented roads from being-blocked and increased the number of forces available for combat operations. By 24 August, more than three hundred thousand refugees assembled at collection points, under Korean police authority escorted them away from the front-line areas.¹⁵⁰

Logistics provided the foundation to extend the UN's operational reach, or the range forces extended decisive combat power against the threat, which ultimately enabled the Inchon invasion.¹⁵¹ To achieve reach, the UN established lines of communication between Sindong (southeast) and Seoul. The North Korean Army cut those lines, at which point, they remained inoperable until December due to a lack of United States signal personnel in Korea. Radio communication, an alternative to cable communications, also proved ineffective due to the mountainous terrain.¹⁵² In the sea, whip antennas replaced directional antennas to maintain communications from the ship to the shore regardless of the shifting wind and seas.¹⁵³

The air force created the effect of simultaneity and depth by establishing air supremacy, enabling friendly freedom of movement and combined arms actions during the daytime supported by air attacks, and limiting the North Korean Army to night attacks. Naval forces positioned

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 383.

¹⁵¹ U.S. Army, "Field Manual 3-0 Operations Change 1," 8-1.

¹⁵² John G. Westover, *Combat Support in Korea* (Washington, D.C.: Combat Forces Press, 1955), 62.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 192.

aircraft carriers close to the shore to launch air missions while escort ships launched attacks on coastal areas. Friendly forces operated more jointly through combined arms to attack with simultaneity and depth massing fires against a dispersed enemy.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, the Joint Chiefs directed General MacArthur extended his reach by commencing a naval blockade of the North Korean coastline. On the east coast, Seventh Fleet guarded up to 41st latitude to prevent enemy reinforcement. On the west coast, the Royal Navy guarded up to thirty-eighth latitude to prevent enemy advance and secure sea lines of communications. Along the southern coast, the South Korean Navy protected bases near the southern ports. As a result, a United States Navy cruiser and two British ships successfully engaged four North Korean torpedo boats, sinking two of the torpedo boats and seven trawlers. A carrier-based strike group arrived on 3 July from Struble's United States Seventh Fleet to launch air attacks on the west coast airfields. This combination of air and naval operations enabled friendly forces to extend their reach, secure basing, and forced the enemy to culminate by impeding the North Korean logistics system and lines of communication.¹⁵⁵

At the operational level, on 10 July, FECOM transitioned to the UN Command (UNC). Although FECOM contained the Joint Strategic Planning and Operations Group (JSPOG), implying a joint headquarters, the JSPOG did not include adequate representation of air, naval, or coalition capabilities. Although the added title, Commander in Chief United Nations Command, implied joint and coalition responsibilities, functionally LTG Walker did not perform as a land component commander within a joint headquarters but served as a corps commander without a headquarters structure to direct the operations of four divisions. LTG Walker possessed no authority over South Korean forces or any forces other than the four United States divisions under

¹⁵⁴ Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea 1950-1953*, 103.

¹⁵⁵ Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu : (June-November 1950)*, 52.

his command. This weak command structure limited his ability to seize the initiative and exploit success through all elements of combat power.¹⁵⁶ MG Almond did not organize the GHQ as a joint headquarters to exploit the opportunities such as the North Korean long lines of supply and a lack of dispersion of forces.¹⁵⁷ The Korean People's Army maintained an extended rail line, against constant bombing by the Fifth United States Air Force, which provided a steady flow of ammunition, fuel, and weapons to the North Koreans through September 1950.¹⁵⁸

Despite not organizing to employ his joint assets in the GHQ, General MacArthur's intuition as an operational artist enabled him to sequence combat actions in time, space, and purpose towards the strategic aim of restoring the international border.¹⁵⁹ Rather than extending the campaign into attrition-based operations, General MacArthur decided to envelope the North Korean forces, which would cause them to culminate, a tactic he perfected during World War II.¹⁶⁰ However, without the successes of delaying actions and improvement in operational logistics, General MacArthur could not realize his Han River vision. General MacArthur clearly linked tactical actions to strategy and used his experience with ship to shore amphibious operations to exploit opportunities the North Koreans presented.¹⁶¹ OPERATION CHROMITE, the product of General MacArthur's vision as an operational artist, took thirteen days to complete and suffered twenty men killed yet caused the destruction of North Korean forces operating in South Korea.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ Menning, *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art*. 431

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*, 418.

¹⁵⁸ Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu : (June-November 1950)*, 393.

¹⁵⁹ Walter G. Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front* (Washington D.C.: U.S. GPO, 1966), 10.

¹⁶⁰ MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 352.

¹⁶¹ Rees, *The Korean War: History and Tactics*, 32.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 45.

Conclusions

The post-World War II era was a period of great turmoil dominated by the emergence of a “cold” conflict between a democratic West and communist East. In an effort to confront that conflict without bankrupting the nation, President Truman began a restructuring of United States military forces that cut significantly funding and training resources for the Army. Simultaneously, President Truman developed a national security strategy to counter communism across the globe. Senior Army leaders failed to communicate the strategic importance of the potential of the fall of Korea and the United States government removed the peninsular nation from its strategic interests. These actions ultimately left the United States without a military strategy towards Korea and left Army forces in the Far East without the appropriate equipment and resources to fight a war. General MacArthur initially failed to appreciate the strategic situation these conditions created, and failed to train his forces for combat. This lack of preparation, combined with a lack of appreciation for the capabilities of the potential North Korean enemy, resulted in FECOM’s ground combat elements unprepared to fight a limited war.

South Korean and United States forces entered the Korean War ill prepared for fighting. When given “suitable doctrine and training, appropriate equipment and intelligent leadership” outstanding soldiers can be made.¹⁶³ In the case of FECOM, poor leadership allowed flawed policy decisions to affect the readiness of soldiers.¹⁶⁴ Clausewitz would call these leaders who do not mitigate risks pedants there to fill a slot, “talent and genius operate outside of the rules, and theory conflicts with practice.”¹⁶⁵ Not preparing combat forces forced a relearning of lessons from World War II at the costs of many lives. Policy drives doctrine but leadership drives

¹⁶³ Heller and Stofft, *America's First Battles, 1776-1965*, 108.

¹⁶⁴ Scnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year*, 55.

¹⁶⁵ Clausewitz, Howard, and Paret, *On War*, 140.

training, during the early months of the Korean War the deficiency in training was “inexcusable”.¹⁶⁶

Nonetheless, despite these tremendous strategic and operational setbacks General MacArthur’s use of operational art to destroy the North Korean forces in South Korea placed the UN in the dominant position for a political settlement. When General MacArthur’s FECOM entered the war in June 1950 against an aggressive Korean People’s Army trained and supported by Soviet leadership, the Republic of Korea’s Army was clearly defeated at the tactical level. Unprepared, General MacArthur’s forces also suffered heavy casualties and destruction during the early months. Although TF Smith suffered significant loss and devastation in both men and equipment with twenty soldiers killed and one hundred and thirty wounded due to being untrained and unprepared, they succeeded to delay the North Koreans and allow the generation of forces in Pusan for an eventual counter attack.¹⁶⁷ Thirty thousand North Korean soldiers escaped when the United States and ROK ground forces executed the breakout from the Pusan Perimeter in September of 1950. General MacArthur succeeded because of his ability to understand the differences in the current environment and his desired end state and develop an approach to mitigate those differences. From this understanding of the operational environment and problem, General MacArthur developed his famous narrative of the Inchon envelopment addressing the naval challenges and unique terrain he articulated to General Collins and Admiral Sherman.¹⁶⁸

General MacArthur’s operational uncertainties included the enemy, his ability to generate combat power, and challenges in the organization of the UN forces. In practice, he visualized opportunities through maneuver and used operational terms such as dislocation and disintegration

¹⁶⁶ Matthew B. Ridgway, *Soldier: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway*, ed. Harold H. Martin (New York:: Harper & Brothers, 1956), 191.

¹⁶⁷ Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu : (June-November 1950)*, 604.

¹⁶⁸ MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 349.

to describe the effects of maneuver on the enemy.¹⁶⁹ In theory, his bold actions appear to be less risky when viewed against his level of competence as an operational artist. General MacArthur visualized the bold envelopment at Inchon in terms of opportunities and risks, where the Joint Chiefs and senior Navy leaders viewed only the risks.¹⁷⁰ With this, General MacArthur provided his commander's the purpose, direction, and motivation to conduct a goal line stance and draw the enemy in at Pusan to buy time for the "Hail Mary" at Inchon.¹⁷¹ MacArthur embodied Liddell-Hart's description of an artist as the ability to dislocate the enemy through maneuver with minimal casualties as the X Corps enveloped the North Koreans at Inchon with little resistance.¹⁷² General MacArthur also embodies Clausewitz's description of genius by his ability to impose order onto the uncertainty of operational variances in accordance with the political aim.¹⁷³ As a practitioner of art, MacArthur intuitively understood that restoring the international boundary would not bring long-lasting peace as only the destruction of the enemy could bring.¹⁷⁴

Significance

The United States Army is now in a state of transition similar to the military of 1949, when the Army underwent a reduction in forces from eight million in 1945 to five hundred and ninety one thousand in 1950.¹⁷⁵ Planners, like General MacArthur in Korea, must possess the ability to employ limited military means against political and budgetary constraints to achieve

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 352. "The envelopment from the north will instantly relieve the pressure upon the south perimeter and, indeed, is the only way that this can be accomplished."

¹⁷⁰ Robert Debs Heinl, *Victory at High Tide; the Inchon-Seoul Campaign* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1968), 39-40.

¹⁷¹ U.S. Army, "Field Manual 6-22 Army Leadership," 1-2.

¹⁷² Hart, *Strategy*, 326.

¹⁷³ Clausewitz, Howard, and Paret, *On War*, 100.

¹⁷⁴ Dolman, "Pure Strategy Power and Policy in the Space and Information Age."

¹⁷⁵ Richard Whelan, *Drawing the Line: The Korean War, 1950-1953* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1990), 58 and 169.

national objectives. Planners must mitigate coming shortages in personnel and resources by using joint, national, and multinational capabilities to place the United States ultimately in a strategically favorable position of negotiation.¹⁷⁶

According to the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance and reflections on the Korean War, the United States will sustain the world's finest military and avoid hollowing the force.¹⁷⁷ In a quote by General Martin E. Dempsey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "this is about rebalancing; I am encouraged that we have a process where strategy is slightly in the lead of our budget decisions."¹⁷⁸ The military will be smaller but senior leaders intend to provide the resources necessary for training, maintenance, and modernization. Dempsey also says that understanding the context is more important in dialogue than the rote recall of facts in his address to the student at Duke University in January 2012.¹⁷⁹ Therefore, planners must understand the current and desired environments in order to recognize the problem. In the future, there may not be the forces available to support an operation similar to CHROMITE; hence, strategy will drive the use of the limited means to the operational commander. Planners must think through secondary and tertiary implications of their recommendations such as the psychological effects of the defeat of TF Smith and the selection of a boundary between North Korea and South Korea.

Like General MacArthur, through the study of history, theory, and doctrine and reflection in and on learning, a student of operational art can transcend from practitioner to artist. Through iteration of the design process, planners gain the experience of identifying the operational problem, and developing an approach. General MacArthur initially failed by employing a

¹⁷⁶ Dolman, "Pure Strategy Power and Policy in the Space and Information Age."

¹⁷⁷ U.S. Department of Defense, "Defense Strategic Guidance," (Washington DC: U.S. GPO, 2012), fact sheet.

¹⁷⁸ General Martin Dempsey, "Military Strategy Drives Budget Decisions," (2011).

¹⁷⁹ U.S. Department of Defense, "Gen. Martin E. Dempsey Speaks at Duke University," (2012).

capability without understanding the enemy. Despite his shortcomings, General MacArthur was an operational thinker. Questions remain then regarding how such a thinker could have failed so utterly early in the campaign. Further, why does it take a senior military commander to design a campaign plan? Why did the FECOM staff not pay attention to the clear indicators of a pending North Korean invasion? Today, the operational planning team leverages the collective genius of the staff to reveal patterns and indicators in the environment to prepare the command and prevent it from being surprised. The planning team must understand the environment and the problem in order to best aid the commander in visualizing complex problems and then organizing and employing forces. Today, as in 1949, strategic priorities, and national interests will drive the use of limited resources and planners must use operational art to employ scarce assets.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Army, "Army Doctrine Publication 3-0," 2-4.

Tables

The following table depicts estimates of the DPRK military strength submitted by KMAG (semi-annual report on 15 June 1950) and the US Embassy (May 1950) as compared to actual DPRK capabilities.¹⁸¹

Table A: Estimates of Armed Forces, Democratic Republic of Korea, May-June 1950			
	DPRK Military Capabilities (Actual Strength June 1950)	KMAG Estimate (June 15, 1950)	U.S. Embassy Estimate (May 11, 1950)
Manpower (KPA/Constabulary/Reserves)	130,600	103,000	183,000
Tanks, T-34	151	64	155
Antitank guns	113	356	380
Howitzers (76/122mm)	286	296	609
Mortars (82/122mm)	748	637	1,162
Machine guns	3,118	6,032	9,728
Aircraft	211	100	195
Naval ships	30	12	24

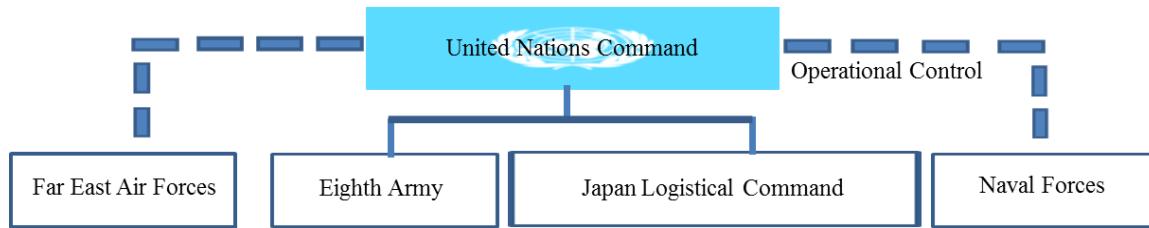
The following table summarizes the above table combined with statistics from Appleman's book *South to the Naktong North to the Yalu* to show the combat power advantage of the North Koreans in terms of troops, tanks, artillery, and joint enablers.¹⁸²

Table B: Comparison of North Korean and South Korean Military Capabilities			
	Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)	Republic of Korea Army (ROKA)	Advantage
Combat Troops	89,000 KPA 18,600 Constabulary <u>23,000 Reserves</u> 130,600	65,000 <u>45,000 Police (Do not fight)</u> 65,000	DPRK KPA: 10 Divisions and 7 BDEs ROKA: 8 Divisions
Tanks, T-34	150 medium tanks	0	DPRK
Artillery	122 mm howitzers SU-76 Guns <u>120/76 mm mortars</u> 12,800 pieces	105mm howitzers <u>81/61 mm mortars</u> 700 pieces	DPRK Outranges ROKA by 5500 m
Aircraft	211	0	DPRK
Navy Ships	30	1	DPRK

¹⁸¹ Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950 : A House Burning*, 215.

¹⁸² Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu : (June-November 1950)*, 11,17.

The following table shows the organization of the United Nations Command under General MacArthur.¹⁸³ Initially, MacArthur initially envisioned a two- division attack with the envelopment of the KPA at Inchon by First Cavalry Division and the counterattack by the Twenty Fourth Division out of Pusan. After the KPA breach of the Han River, MacArthur requested more forces to conduct the envelopment at Inchon.



¹⁸³ Billy C. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow, November 1950-July 1951* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GPO, 1990), 26.

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